

Susumu KAMIJO

Juxtapoz,

Susumu Kamijo "How Was Your Summer?"

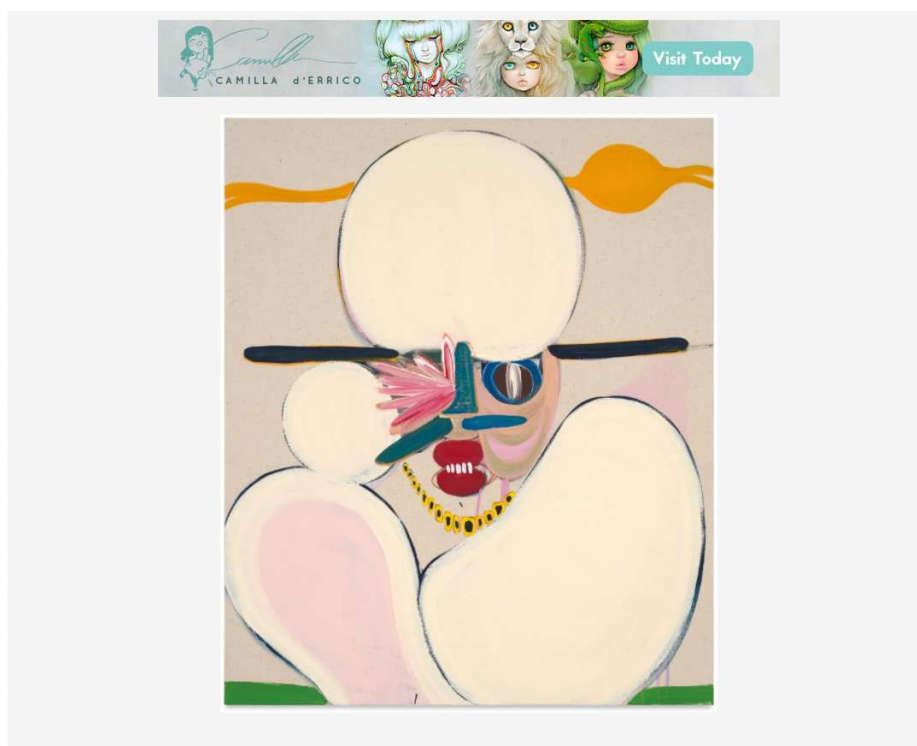
August 2021

Susumu Kamijo "How Was Your Summer?" @ Harper's Books, East Hampton

Harper's Books // August 28, 2021 - September 29, 2021

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Harper's is pleased to announce the gallery's second solo exhibition with [Susumu Kamijo](#), *How Was Your Summer?*, at the East Hampton location. In the fifteen paintings on view, Kamijo continues his approach of illustratively rendering poodles through the genre of portraiture.

With this latest body of Flashe paintings on canvas, Kamijo's portraits of poodles take on a surreal and confrontational character. Inhabiting sparse landscapes, the animals are often depicted at close range with a bulging eye intently staring back at the viewer. As distinct from his prior style, which was defined by intricate patterns and bright palettes, Kamijo's current technique visually deconstructs the poodles' anatomy, reducing it to the most essential elements. Colors are toned down and generously applied in wide swaths, amorphous blots of pigment are cobbled together to produce torsos, and intersecting angular shapes are composed into heads. Their contorted snouts and detached jaws form grimaces that expose porcelain-like teeth surrounded by plump, rosy lips. Such minimal backgrounds and simplified bodies put emphasis on the creatures' eerily humanoid faces, which resemble tribal masks or robotic sci-fi creations. By channeling the sensibility of the artists that have influenced him—Bacon's screaming popes, Guston's smoking figures, and de Kooning's disintegrating nudes—Kamijo's expressive poodles exude a similar kind of intensity.

While the poodle has remained a staple to his visual language, Kamijo arrived at this subject not by a particular love for dogs, but by accident. On a whim one day, he decided to draw his partner's pet toy poodle. By letting the subject become a theme in his work, the trajectory began to move by its own momentum. Over the course of several years, the dogs evolved in character, mood, and style. Conceptualizing his pictures as living things, Kamijo believes that the poodles in this latest series have transmogrified into something else entirely: their somas have become empty vessels that host unknown sentient organisms, morphing from domesticated pets to wild beasts. *How Was Your Summer?* subverts the lighthearted portrayal of poodles as precious show dogs, bringing unsettling aspects of this motif to the surface.